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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/

REVIEWED BY J.M. Razi DATE May 6, 1982

FROM: TRIPOLI

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 526, MARCH 23, 11 PM

PRIORITY

SENT DEPARTMENT 526, REPEATED INFORMATION BENGHAZI UNNUMBERED.

I SAW PRIME MINISTER BEN HALIM THIS AFTERNOON IN ACCORD WITH INSTRUCTION CONTAINED DEPTELS 397 AND 419 PRESENT ALSO WERE UNDER SECRETARY SULEIMAN JERBI AND MY DEPUTY, DAVID NES.

MY APPROACH WAS MADE IN FOLLOWING ORDER:

1. OUTLINE OF FIRST SEVEN ITEMS OF ASSISTANCE PROPOSED BY US GOVERNMENT OMITTING ITEMS EIGHT AND NINE;

2. STATEMENT OF BASIS OF US-LIBYAN RELATIONS ON WHICH AID EXTENDED INCLUDING FIRST FIVE POINTS SECOND SERIES NUMBERED ITEMS DEPTEL 397;

3. REQUESTED THAT AS TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF LIBYAN POSITION, BEN HALIM MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENT REJECTING SOVIET OFFER IN ACCORD ASSURANCE GIVEN DURING HIS MARCH 7 CONVERSATION WITH NES (EMBTEL 275);

4. RAISED NECESSITY FOR FORMAL WRITTEN ASSURANCES FROM LIBYAN GOVERNMENT CONCERNING ITS POLICY ON RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION AND EGYPT SPECIFICALLY WITH REGARD TO PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF INTEREST TO US GOVERNMENT AS OUTLINED REFERENCE INSTRUCTIONS.

IN CONCLUSION I STATED USUAL AGREEMENTS COVERING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, FAMINE RELIEF WHEAT AND ARMS ASSISTANCE WOULD HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATED.

PRIME

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-2- 526, MARCH 23, 11 PM, FROM TRIPOLI.

PRIME MINISTER'S REACTION WAS EVERYTHING WE COULD HAVE WISHED. HE SAID HE CONSIDERED OUR OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE EMINENTLY FAIR AND DEMONSTRATIVE OF US GOODWILL. THEY WOULD PERMIT HIM TO "STAND UP AND DEFEND POLICY OF ORIENTATION TO WEST WHICH I WISH TO CONTINUE."

WITH RESPECT TO PUBLIC REJECTION SOVIET OFFERS PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WOULD BE REQUIRED GIVE FULL EXPLANATION OF REASONS BEHIND SUCH POLICY IN SECRET MEETING PARLIAMENT MARCH 27 AT WHICH HE WOULD ALSO ASK FOR VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. NEXT DAY PRESS RELEASE WOULD BE ISSUED STATING THAT PARLIAMENT HAD SUSTAINED PRIME MINISTER IN HIS REJECTION SOVIET OFFERS AND IN HIS REPLY TO PARLIAMENTARY INTERPELLATION.

WITH REGARD TO WRITTEN ASSURANCES REQUESTED (4) ABOVE, PRIME MINISTER STATED HE COULD GIVE ME HIS ORAL COMMITMENT ON ALL OF THEM WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION LIMITATION ON LIBYA'S RIGHT ACCEPT ASSISTANCE FROM SISTER ARAB STATES. EVEN WITH RESPECT THIS POINT THE PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTED FORMULA WHEREBY GOL MIGHT AGREE REJECT ANY OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE FROM ANY STATE WHOSE INTENT WAS CLEARLY TO DISRUPT US-LIBYAN RELATIONS. BEN HALIM SAID THERE MIGHT BE CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTIES HOWEVER IN PUTTING THESE ASSURANCES IN WRITTEN FORMS SINCE SUCH DOCUMENT WOULD REQUIRE CABINET APPROVAL AND IT WOULD APPEAR TO CABINET THAT US AID WAS CONDITIONAL UPON WRITTEN ASSURANCES. HOWEVER, PRIME MINISTER DID NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY GIVING ME SECRET LETTER AND SUGGESTED THAT SULEIMAN JERBI AND NES MEET NEXT WEEK IN EFFORT DRAFT ACCEPTABLE FORMULA.

INTEND SEEKING WITH BEN HALIM NEXT WEEK.

FROM ABOVE IT IS CLEAR THAT US IS WELL ON ROAD TO WINNING WHAT IS IN OUR OPINION SIGNAL DIPLOMATIC VICTORY. IF WE EXPLOIT BREAK-THROUGH RESULTING FROM CLEAR AND PUBLIC REJECTION OF SOVIET OFFERS BY LIBYA, REAL POSSIBILITY EXISTS TO ESTABLISH ROADBLOCK IN WAY OF SOVIET ECONOMIC OFFENSIVE IN NEAR EAST.

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FULL COVERAGE THIS AFTERNOON'S CONVERSATION WILL BE POUCHED.

BRITISH EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED OUTLINE US PROGRAM PER DEPTEL 40#.

TAPPIN

TT:CWD:HER

#AS RECEIVED. BELIEVED BE REFERENCE TO DEPTEL 405.

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